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## EDITOR'S MISCELLANY



### PREVENT THE FLY

WE just received a communication saying "What is the best thing for flies." The reply is, it depends upon the point from which you view the proposition. If you mean from the fly aspect, it is filth; if you mean from the position of the baby, the child or the adult human individual, it is the *absence of filth*. The best medicine for flies is *preventive medicine*. The sequence of "filth, flies, fever" has been established. Abate filth nuisance and you have abated fly nuisance; abate fly nuisance and you have prevented one-quarter of the typhoid fever that would otherwise occur. The Chicago people say, "Swat the fly before he is born." This is a fundamental principle of disease prevention. Too many people consider that later in the summer and early fall is typhoid season, and are giving the subject no active concern at this moment. From the stand-point of prevention of typhoid fever, now is the season, and action taken *now* toward preventing a supply of flies, and toward the establishment of a safe, uncontaminated water supply, is essentially *seasonable*. If these two principles could be consistently and practically maintained, we would have very little typhoid fever. Both of these come very well within the range of possibility, but neither will take care of itself automatically. It will require an early, determined, and concerted *action* on the part of all concerned. A few flies now means a host of flies next month and many cases of typhoid fever the next month.

If we wait until the "fly swatting" season is on, we will not accomplish much in the prevention of typhoid fever. The only logical line of campaign is in efforts to prevent the breeding of flies. This can be accomplished only by removal or destruction of the material conducive to fly breeding.

Flies breed in filth, preferably in manure, but also in any rubbish and decaying material. The important thing, then, is to destroy all such material. The stuff that cannot be destroyed should be thoroughly screened. Uncovered manure piles should not be tolerated in any neighborhood. If they are not promptly disposed of, charges should be pre-

ferred against the owner for maintaining a nuisance which is a menace to the public health. Any local board of health has ample authority to abate the manure-pile-nuisance, and refusal or neglect to do so constitutes a failure of duty. No garbage should be deposited upon the ground. It should be buried, burned, or deposited in closely covered cans to be removed at frequent intervals and properly disposed of. An open garbage can, or garbage deposited upon the ground or placed anywhere within the access of flies, constitutes a nuisance, and should be so treated by the local health authorities. Persons having knowledge of existing fly-breeding places in a neighborhood should report promptly to the local health officer, and he should order an immediate cleaning up and the establishment of such conditions as are not conducive to fly breeding. Prompt and immediate attention to this will do more toward preventing the fly nuisance than a dozen "fly-swatting" campaigns later in the season.

All open privies should be thoroughly screened. Flies going directly from the privy vault to the kitchen and dining room, carry quantities of germ-laden material and deposit it upon the food. A great many cases of typhoid fever, cholera infantum, and other intestinal diseases are to be charged against just such existing conditions. All foods should be kept absolutely guarded against access by flies. After flies have deposited in milk or other foodstuffs, the particles of filth which they invariably carry around, the disease-producing germs multiply rapidly and become an active agent in causing serious sickness. Groceries and meat markets which are not kept free from flies, should be avoided in every instance. In a great many cases, the real cost of the article purchased in markets should be considered as including the expense of the typhoid fever, cholera infantum, and other diarrhoeal diseases following. The patrons of the market places are the ones in best position to cause the establishment of sanitary conditions. All health officers are asked to impress upon the proprietors of grocery stores, meat markets, ice cream rooms, etc., the importance of these principles, and in any instance in which the public health is menaced by insanitary conditions, to demand the protection of the public.

All house doors and windows should be screened of course. Special attention should be given that screens fit tightly.

If these precautions are taken, the fly nuisance will be minimized. Even then, though, fly swatting will be in order at all times. The early fly is the most important one to swat.

As important as "*swat the fly*" may be, of far greater importance is *prevent the fly*.—MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

## DECLINE IN TUBERCULOSIS DEATH RATE

IN the decade from 1901 to 1910, the death rate from tuberculosis in the United States declined from 196.9 for each 100,000 persons living to 160.3, a decrease of 18.7 per cent., while the general death rate, including all causes of death, declined only one-half as fast, or at the rate of 9.7 per cent., from 1655.0 to 1495.8.

These figures were given out in a statement issued recently by The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis. They are based on data abstracted from the reports of the United States Bureau of the Census, and cover the registration area in this country. According to the statement, the tuberculosis death rate has declined steadily since 1904, when it was 201.6. On the other hand, the general death rate shows a fluctuation downward in general trend, but not as steady as the tuberculosis rate. The decline in the tuberculosis death rate in the last ten years means a saving of 27,000 lives at the present time.

In certain cities, such as New York, Boston, Cleveland, and Chicago, and in states like Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, the decline in the tuberculosis death rate is much more marked than in the country at large.

The National Association says that there are many factors working together to cause the decline in the tuberculosis death rate, such factors as the change in the character of our urban population, increased sanitation, and better housing, but probably as potent a factor as any has been the nation wide antituberculosis campaign. "It may be foretold with considerable certainty," the statement concludes, "that when the effects of the present rapidly increasing provision for the care of tuberculosis patients shall have become evident, the decline in the death rate from consumption in the coming decade will be even more marked than that in the last one."—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS.

## THE WOMEN OF THE ORIENT IN THE LEAD

PRESS despatches report that the Chinese National Parliament at Nankin has granted equal suffrage to the women of China, the law to take effect immediately, and that one woman, Yik Yuan Ying, a college graduate, has been elected a member of Parliament from the province of Canton. Women voters, according to this despatch, will be subject to the same restrictions as men—that is, they must be able to read and write, must be property owners, and 20 years of age. When in history was there a revolution such as has come over the Celestial Empire,

at least in so short a time and with such complete overturning of old forms of government? Women voting in China before the franchise is granted in the United States or England! Any one who should have prophesied this two years ago would certainly have been thought insane. As things now stand, the Anglo-Saxons, who are so proud of their chivalry toward women, must look out lest they should be the last to grant to women their right to partake in all the privileges and responsibilities of government.—*The Woman's Medical Journal*.

#### POTABLE WATER

DURING the year the laboratory has examined 296 samples of water for potability. These samples came from 88 different localities.

When one observes that nearly 60 per cent. of these water samples have been unsafe for drinking purposes, he cannot but be impressed that there is a general need for a systematic investigation of the water supplies in the state.

There is at the present time but very few inland lakes and rivers that furnish a water supply safe for drinking purposes, and the contamination is increasing from year to year. The amount of sewage entering the Great Lakes system is increasing and cities located upon their shores and using their water must either from time to time extend their intakes further out or construct purification plants.

Many of the inland cities and towns depend upon wells for their water supply and such wells are often badly constructed and improperly protected. Some individuals evidently regard a well as a hole in the ground with a curbing to serve no other purpose than to prevent collapse. Wells curbed with brick, boards or stone are seldom safe if there be any source of contamination in their vicinity. We believe the Department should issue circulars of instructions to the people in the state, calling attention to the danger from contaminated wells and giving detailed information concerning their proper construction.

The general notion that spring water is always pure should also be dispelled. Some of the popular spring waters in the state have been found to be badly contaminated, and on a few occasions spring waters said to possess medicinal qualities have been found to contain enormous quantities of bacterial contamination and apparently in some instances such contamination has been the source from which alleged medicinal properties were derived.

The typhoid mortality in this state is certainly too high and inasmuch as contaminated water is known to be one of the chief carriers of typhoid infection we believe this subject should receive early and careful atten-

tion. While we hesitate in consideration of this enormous problem let us not forget the now famous Mills-Reincke phenomenon and Hazen's Theorem,—“Where one death from typhoid fever has been avoided by the use of better water, a certain number of deaths, probably two or three, from other causes have been avoided.”—MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

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#### FUNCTIONAL DERANGEMENT OF LIVER

THE chief causes of functional derangement of the liver are summarized by Bain as follows: Dyspepsia, gastro-intestinal disturbance, alcoholic excess, rich and highly-seasoned food, fevers, nervous influences and residence in the tropics. The best method of treatment is to diminish the amount of work the liver has to perform and to facilitate the circulation through it. There must be a limitation of the food supply; but it must be the nutrition of the liver cell, and thereby injuriously affect its activity. A mixed diet is the best, the articles being of simple composition. Three meals a day are advised unless the gall-bladder is involved. Carbohydrates and fats should be limited, as the former tend to ferment, and the latter are not easily absorbed if the quantity of bile excreted is diminished. Alcohol should be forbidden. Other irritants such as mustard, pepper, red pepper, horseradish, ginger, cloves, strong meat broths, large quantities of salt and the empyreumatic substances that are formed in baking and roasting should be avoided. In most cases it will not be necessary for the patient to exercise dietetic self-denial for more than a week. Rest after meals should be enjoined so that the functional hyperæmia of the organ is not disturbed. Exercise such as golf is very important. With increased respiratory effort the liver is rhythmically compressed, and the venous blood flows more rapidly to the heart. For those unsatisfactory individuals who take little or no exercise, massage, general and special, is desirable.—*Jour. Amer. Med. Assoc.*